



RISK IDENTIFICATION

PI DOCUMENT – DOCUMENT RDP

RIIR-2022-002

PPS REPORT – RAPPORT SPP

PPS-SPP-2022-520

PROS – SIRP

2022-74888

Freedom Convoys

2022-01-29

PPS-PI assess with **MEDIUM** confidence that the Convoy event could possibly pose a threat to the physical security of the Parliamentary Precinct and is likely to cause significant disruption to Parliamentary operations.

PI has no specific information to indicate a credible threat of planned violence. However, **volatile situational factors could contribute to a risk of significant spontaneous and opportunistic violence.**

Organizers have indicated their intent to use vehicles and other tactics to create significant disruption in the downtown core. **Closely-related groups have demonstrated interest in gaining access to Precinct buildings.**

The subject matter and circumstances of the demonstration are likely to attract individuals predisposed to ideologically motivated violent extremist (IMVE) action. **Situational factors could further contribute to a perception of the event as a critical flashpoint in the movement.**

Partners have identified promotional content edited to include "**Storm Parliament at 1:30.**" Engagement with this rhetoric is currently unknown, but organizational factors may contribute to **unpredictable and suggestible crowd behaviour.**

Key Assumptions

- Convoy leadership will be able to access and disburse >4M in GoFundMe donations.
- No significant, coordinated counterdemonstration will confront the demonstration.

Information Gaps

- Specific NCR-based itinerary for 2022-01-28 and 2022-01-29
- Leadership structure upon arrival in NCR. Organizers seem to have minimal influence over participants.
- PI has no means to collect information from private online groups, where a significant quantity of anti-PHO communication is believed to occur

Risks for Escalation

- Statements or announcements by government officials perceived to target unvaccinated persons
- Chatter or announcements regarding prolonged or additional restrictive Public Health Orders (PHO)
- Negative interactions with law enforcement on convoy route leading to a perception of state persecution.
- If convoy leadership is unable to access GoFundMe donations, they will be delegitimized; leading to unchecked, disorganized, cellular demonstration and disruption with significant crowd management challenges.



SUMMARY

The declared primary intent of the Freedom Convoy is to use vehicles and other tactics to create significant disruptions within Ottawa's Downtown Core on 2022-01-29 and for the week following in order to induce the federal government to end public health-related mandates. (R) Prevalent chatter indicates that many supporters also seek the dissolution of the government and resignation of PM TRUDEAU.

Given situational and organizational factors and considering early information from partners, **PI does not anticipate that attendance will exceed 10k participants.** (BR)

PI anticipates that participation after 2022-01-29 is likely to fall dramatically. Organizers have identified that the Parliamentary Precinct is a specific target for disruption on 2022-01-29. Prevalent chatter from participants corroborated by statements by influencers and leadership indicate that media buildings and access roads serving Rideau Hall and 24 Sussex may be targeted on 2022-01-29 or in the following days. (BR)

Presently, the specific timing and nature of all planned disruptions are unknown. However, communication from organizers indicates that a primary action on 2022-01-29 will include the use of vehicles to occupy eastbound lanes of Wellington St. in proximity to PH. (BR) It is possible that participants may seek to leverage overwhelming numbers to occupy further roadways and obstruct additional areas such as PH access points contrary to organizer and police direction. **Demonstration leadership's influence over participants is questionable.** Open source and partner information suggests that multiple Road Captains have demonstrated difficulty controlling their convoys en route. Reportedly, some participants blocked all lanes of traffic when they were supposed to leave one lane clear and did not move when requested by Road Captains. (R) "Slow roll" tactics to disrupt traffic throughout downtown are also possible. A degree of organic coordination is possible independent of leadership, as **participants have been advised to download a cellular push-to-talk app.** (R)

A key Freedom Convoy organizer was the lead organizer of Canada Unity (CU) convoy, members of which attempted to gain unauthorized entry to West Block, engaged in maskless shopping at area shopping centres and stores, sought to obstruct pedestrian and vehicle traffic near media buildings on the Precinct and in the Byward Market and obstructed vehicular traffic around 24 Sussex in 2021-12. (R) The CU organizer has indicated that further actions after 2022-01-29 are likely to be similar to these previous actions, (UR) however the level of influence that this organizer will exert over the larger group is unclear. Notably, the individual who sought to gain access to West Block was part of an affinity group that appeared to operate with minimal regard for CU leadership. (R)

On 2022-01-25, partners identified Convoy promotional materials on social media that had been crudely edited to include "Storm parliament at 1:30." At this time, its credibility and veracity are questionable. Anti-PHO groups intending to participate in the demonstration have shared what is believed to be the unedited image, which makes no reference to storming Parliament. Observed social media engagement has largely questioned the origin and credibility of the image. However, this rhetoric may be taken at face value by extremist elements within the crowd and may contribute to such elements surging to breach West or Centre Block at the identified time. (UR) Influencers associated with the ideologically-aligned Dialogon movement were observed to engage in aspirationally-toned conversation expressing support for a Capitol Insurrection-style event to take place in relation to the 2022-01-29 event. Though situational factors may mitigate widespread, unified engagement in such an action, PI notes that the movement's power structure is ill-defined and comprised of many smaller groups and unaffiliated individuals, and expectations for the event remain unclear. **Weak leadership and poor organizational communication regarding planned activities on-site could contribute to extremely unpredictable and suggestible crowd behaviour vulnerable to charismatic direction and mob mentality.**

PPS-PI has no information to indicate a specific credible threat of planned violence, (BR) however volatile situational factors could contribute to a risk of spontaneous, confrontational and/or opportunistic violence with a high degree of contagion.

Qualitatively, PI and partner agencies have observed an increase in the hostility of online rhetoric directed toward public officials or institutions who are perceived to support recent increased restrictions against the anti-PHO community, which could indicate the presence of an escalating siege mentality and **active threat environment.** This perception may lead to a situation whereby elements within the movement begin to believe that there is no political solution to their grievance and **react readily to a flashpoint for violent action.** Further, aligned individuals or groups with a nexus to IMVE may perceive the widespread online activity reflective of a large-scale mobilization and traditional media coverage of related unprecedented fundraising for 2022-01-29 as indicating **a critical opportunity to ignite violence** as a means of evolving the movement to meet their ideology. *At a 2022-01-22 anti-PHO event in Fredericton, a small group of people within the 400-person demonstration reportedly tried to incite dissent with a potential for violence. Two men were arrested and are facing multiple charges.* (R)

Aligned extremist threat actors or groups frustrated by insufficient participation/action in the event and perceiving dire consequences may also seek to further their cause by conducting **IMVE action against a grievance-related target in proximity to the event,** ie: in the hours or days following.



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PPS-PI has previously identified the existence of substantial ideological crossover between participants in the anti-PHO movement and individuals associated with far-right populist extremism. **The subject matter and context of the demonstration is likely to attract ideologically-aligned extremist threat actors or groups, which would enhance the likelihood of opportunistic or confrontational violence.** Open source and partner information indicates that some organizers and potential participants have current or past associations with Soldiers of Odin, Canada First, La Meute, and Dialogon/RE RE. (R) PI has no information that these groups plan to attend in an official capacity.

Recently, media reports have featured several instances of statements or announcements by prominent federal political figures that have been perceived to target individuals who chose not to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) notes that the threat against Canadian politicians, public officials, and symbols of government remains elevated due to the pandemic. (R) This is consistent with PI's observations and assessments of the current Parliamentary Threat Environment. PI and partners have observed a shift in tactics in the anti-PHO movement toward personalized threat occurrences, including the doxxing of politicians, public figures and political staff, and an increase of demonstration and obstruction actions outside the personal residences of public officials. Partner information indicates that a social media user was seeking that the addresses of Liberal Members of Parliament in the Ottawa area be posted, so that Convoy participants could attend those sites. (R) **If significant demonstration activity persists until 2022-01-31, chance and engineered encounters between activists and identifiable parliamentarians/staff could carry a risk of harassment and opportunistic confrontational violence.**

PI currently has no information to indicate the presence of a planned counterdemonstration, though opposed activist networks have demonstrated awareness of the 2022-01-29 demonstration. (R) At past similar events, opposed individuals or cells have attended in order to gather information on participants. Given the likely emotional state of the crowd, such occurrences or **spontaneous friction with opposing passersby may generate minor instances of confrontational violence.**

PI continues to conduct targeted information collection activities and liaise with partners.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS - CONSIDERATION OPERATIONNELLES

Indications that the primary action on 2022-01-29 will include the use of vehicles to occupy eastbound lanes of Wellington St. in proximity to PH. **Be advised that it is possible that participants may seek to leverage overwhelming numbers to occupy and obstruct additional areas such as PH access points contrary to organizer and police direction. Demonstration leadership's influence over participants has been questionable and participants may pivot to more disruptive actions.** Participants frustrated with ineffective actions may also splinter to conduct smaller actions at other Precinct or unaffiliated buildings in the area. A degree of organic coordination is possible independent of leadership, as participants have been advised to download a cellular push-to-talk app. (R)

On 2022-01-25, partners identified Convoy promotional materials on social media that had been crudely edited to include "Storm parliament at 1:30." (R) At this time, its credibility and veracity are questionable. However, this rhetoric may be taken at face value by extremist elements within the crowd and may contribute to such elements surging to breach West or Centre Block at the identified time. (UR) Though situational factors may mitigate widespread, unified engagement in such an action, PI notes that the movement's power structure is ill-defined and comprised of many smaller groups and unaffiliated individuals, and expectations for the event remain unclear. **Weak leadership and poor organizational communication regarding planned activities on-site could contribute to extremely unpredictable and suggestible crowd behaviour vulnerable to charismatic direction and mob mentality.**

PPS-PI has no information to indicate a specific credible threat of planned violence, however volatile situational factors could contribute to a risk of spontaneous, confrontational and/or opportunistic violence with a high degree of contagion. (BR)

Online chatter reflects an escalating siege mentality and active-threat environment within the anti-public health order (PHO) community which could result in minor incidents of violence or police/PPS intervention having a cascading effect and leading to significant confrontational violence and creating concerns for officer safety. (R)

OS information indicates that multiple participants in the demonstration may be current or former law enforcement or military personnel with an awareness of law enforcement tactics and equipment. (R)

Elements within the anti-PHO movement may respond to situational factors with the belief that there is no political solution to their grievance and **react readily to a flashpoint for violent action.** Further, aligned individuals or groups with a nexus to ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) may perceive 2022-01-29 as a critical opportunity to ignite political violence. **At a 2022-01-22 anti-PHO event in Fredericton, a small group of people within the 400-person demonstration reportedly tried to incite dissent with a potential for violence. Two men were arrested and are facing multiple charges.** (R)



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Frontline members should be cognizant of small, affinity groups with clustered behaviours or characteristics (ie: common protective or communications equipment, backpacks, identity-concealing measures) moving independently within the larger group.

The subject matter and context of the demonstration is likely to attract ideologically-aligned extremist threat actors or groups, which would enhance the likelihood of opportunistic or confrontational violence. Such elements, frustrated by insufficient participation/action in the event and perceiving dire consequences may also seek to further their cause by conducting IMVE action against a grievance-related target in proximity to the event, ie: in the hours or days following. (BR)

If significant demonstration activity persists until 2022-01-31, chance and engineered encounters between activists and identifiable parliamentarians/staff could carry a risk of harassment and opportunistic confrontational violence.

RELIABILITY CAVEATS

(R) – (F)	(BR) – (CF)	(UR) – (FI)	(DR) – (FR)
Reliable – Fiable	Believed Reliable – Cru fiable	Unknown Reliability – Fiabilité inconnu	Doubtful Reliability – Fiabilité redoutable

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PPS Protective Intelligence

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